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REMARKS

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 9-13, 15-19, 21, 29, 38-41, and 43-44 have been allowed and that claims 4, 24, and 27 contain allowable subject matter but were objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim. Rather than re-write claims 4, 24, and 27 in independent form, applicants have elected to amend the respective rejected base claims which should place those amended base claims, and the claims that depend therefrom, in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 42 under 35 USC §102(e) as anticipated by Thakur et al (commonly-assigned). Applicants have now canceled claim 42, mooted this ground of rejection.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 22, 23, 25, 26, and 28 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Thakur. Independent claim 1 has now been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 4 (now canceled) that was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants submit that claim 1 as amended, along with claims 2-3, 5-6, and 8 that depend directly or indirectly therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

With respect to independent claim 22, the subject matter from claim 24 (now canceled) has been incorporated therein. As claim 24 was indicated to contain allowable subject matter, applicants submit that claim 22 as amended is in condition for allowance.

With respect to claims 23, 25, 26, and 28, applicants have amended independent claims 23 and 25 to incorporate the subject matter of claims 24 and 27, respectively, (now canceled) that were indicated by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants submit that claims 23 and 25, along with claims 26 and 28 that depend from claim 25, are now in condition for allowance.

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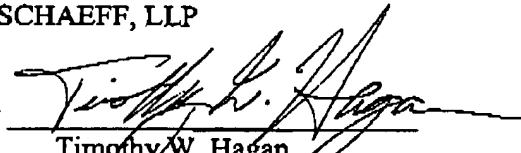
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With the above amendments, applicants submit that all of the remaining claims pending in this application, namely claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-13, 15-19, 21-23, 25-26, 28-29, 38-41, and 43-44, are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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